



Wellness Provider Validation Master Policy Package

**Integrative Health and Wellness Program
Washington D.C. VA Medical Center**

September 30th, 2014

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Dear VA Colleagues,

Like many VA Medical Centers, the Integrative Health and Wellness (IHW) Program at the Washington DC VA Medical Center has been in the process of assessing its health and wellness offerings for Veterans and staff over the last year. IHW is currently offering eight wellness modalities as part of its expanding programs, including auricular acupuncture, Heartmath biofeedback, iRest Yoga Nidra, wellness massage, Mindfulness Base Stress Reduction (MBSR), qi gong/tai chi, reiki, and yoga.

A persistent question in the VA community has been the credentialing of integrative service providers. Since many of the specialties offered do not yet, as of this writing, have federal occupational codes, the path to hire qualified providers even under contract has been unclear. In the interim, individual hospitals have pieced together their own programs.

Under a FY14 grant from the Office of Patient Centered Care, IHW began work on the question of how to validate these providers. As it turns out, the VA's National Credentialing Office has in fact identified a correct process to validate appropriately trained staff so that they can provide wellness services to Veterans at VA facilities. The Director of the VA's National Credentialing Office clarified that these service providers do not follow the regular credentialing process for clinical staff. The direction to VA hospitals from the National Credentialing Office has been that each hospital needs to identify an internal mechanism to assure verification or authentication of wellness providers' credentials and competency, and that a review process by an internal health promotion committee has been a typical way to do so.

As a service to other VA facilities and as part of our grant work, IHW is sharing both the overview of its internal process, and its validation policy documents for the eight wellness services it provides here at the hospital. All of these documents have been reviewed by the National Credentialing Office; for each of these modalities the policies outline proficiencies, education, and certification requirements; identify session protocols; and provide both a research background as well as an activity policy document. The validation protocol outlined in the overview was reviewed and accepted by the DC VA's Medical Center Director, and its Medical Executive Committee.

It is important to note that the policy documents were developed in conjunction with the DC VA Medical Center's Integrative Health and Wellness Steering Committee, a cross-departmental, cross-disciplinary group of more than 50 staff including doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, physician's assistants, and other clinical staff. The proficiencies and policies for individual modalities were refined in consultation with advanced professionals in the field and national professional and training organizations. Under the National Credentialing Office's guidance, individual VA hospitals must each determine their own minimum proficiencies to practice and identify their own policy guidelines. What we offer here is the best professional consensus that we identified,

and which was accepted as such by the appropriate authoritative bodies for this hospital.

Since it is an additional question which frequently gets asked, we also identified, to the extent that we were able, which VA facilities are currently providing these integrative services. We expect that this list will quickly grow out of date as other facilities expand these needed wellness service provisions to Veterans, as well as to staff.

We hope this overview and these policies will assist other hospitals in expanding their patient centered, integrative care and increasing Veterans' opportunities to achieve health, wellness and wholeness.

Sincerely,

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**Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
Integrative Health and Wellness Program's
Wellness Practitioner Validation Process**

September 30, 2014

The Integrative Health and Wellness (IHW) Program is offering eight wellness modalities as part of its expanding programs for Veterans and staff at DCVAMC, including auricular acupuncture, Heartmath biofeedback, iRest Yoga Nidra, wellness massage, Mindfulness Base Stress Reduction (MBSR), qi gong/tai chi, reiki, and yoga.

The VA's National Credentialing Office has identified the correct process to validate appropriately trained DCVAMC staff and contractors so that they can provide wellness services to Veterans at the hospital. They clarified that as these services are offered as a part of a health and wellness promotion program, and not as clinical or therapeutic treatment, they are identified as wellness promotion activities, which do not fall under the purview of Credentialing, or a hospital's Medical Executive Committee. The direction to VA hospitals from the National Credentialing Office has been that each hospital needs to identify an internal mechanism to assure verification or authentication of wellness providers' credentials and competency, and that a review process by a health promotion committee such as the DCVAMC's Integrative Health and Wellness Steering Committee has been a typical way to do so. The Director of the hospital and the Medical Executive Committee should be briefed on how the Steering Committee review process is defined, including how professional competency is identified and assured, and that the practice of these modalities falls within state licensure requirements if FTE staff are providing these services. However, these activities and the individual providers themselves are not reviewed or approved by MECs, as they are not providing clinical or therapeutic treatment.

The IHW program has thus identified a validation review process that will be undertaken by staff wishing to provide these services to Veterans in the hospital. Credentialing documents have been prepared for each of these modalities that outline proficiencies, education, and certification requirements; identify session protocols; and provide both a research background as well as an activity policy document. Staff interested in providing these wellness services must be licensed, have a clinical degree, or two years professional experience in a health care or clinical setting.

In seeking validation to provide wellness services, staff will

- Present their training and credentials to the IHW Steering Committee,
- Provide copies of state licensure with the appropriate regulation identified indicating their ability to provide these services as part of their scope, and
- Conduct an interview with the IHW Committee.

Once approved, staff will attend an orientation to wellness provision in the hospital, as well as an orientation to their individual wellness service. That orientation will include the scheduling of a supervised service provision session, registration in an on-going

working group with an assigned mentor, identification of continuing education opportunities, review of standardized CPRS note activity, and overview of IHW program support. The general orientation will include a review of core competencies including Understanding Military Culture, and Ethics for Wellness Service Provision. A wellness activity provision form will be sent to the staff for inclusion in their personnel folder. Yearly evaluation of staff performance continues to be the responsibility of individual departments.

CPRS notes will capture these wellness activities with standard language that will be provided to each staff member as they go through the validation process. As has been the case previously, in order for a Veteran to participate in the Integrative Health and Wellness Program, a consult must be placed by their provider, and all wellness sessions must be documented in Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS).

Auricular Acupuncture: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of auricular acupuncture as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DC VAMC. A Veteran may be referred for auricular acupuncture session by any DC VAMC clinical care provider. Additionally, a Veteran may elect an auricular acupuncture session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Providers of auricular acupuncture in the hospital will become eligible to deliver the service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: Acupuncture originated in China over 2,500 years ago and is one of the oldest, most frequently used medical procedures in the world. Acupuncturists employ very fine-gauge, sterile, stainless steel needles which are placed at defined anatomic points to restore balance and regulation to the body, mind, emotions and spirit. In auricular acupuncture, location points on the outer ear are used for this purpose.

Minimum Proficiencies: To provide auricular acupuncture at DCVAMC, the practitioner must have either (a) a state license in acupuncture (L.Ac.) with a masters degree in acupuncture (M.Ac.) from an ACAOM-accredited institution and Diplomate Board Certification from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine or b) a state license as a Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant with Helms Institute Acupuncture training or its equivalent. Practitioners must provide documentation of a passing score on the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine's Clean Needle Technique course. They must adhere to VHA policies for clinical providers. If the acupuncturist is not a licensed physician (i.e., MD, DO), then they must have a physician supervisor within DCVAMC.

Examples of VA Medical facilities with Acupuncture and Auricular Acupuncture Programs: Richmond, Ann Arbor, San Diego, Seattle, Washington D.C.

Session Protocols: DCVAMC's wellness auricular acupuncture program includes sessions tailored to suit the unique needs of the Veteran population, and provide the appropriate level of support for each individual. Auricular acupuncture sessions run between 45-75 minutes. At the end of the session, the instructor will complete an auricular acupuncture wellness note in CPRS, which will include: the length of the session, focus of the session, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the session by the Veteran, and plan for future participation. If there are any particular observations or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted in the session notes.

Research: Research suggests that auricular acupuncture assists in supporting

individuals with health and wellness challenges including chemical addictions, mood disorders, obesity, and chronic pain.

Auricular Acupuncture: Overview

Acupuncture originated in China over 2,500 years ago and is one of the oldest, most frequently used medical procedures in the world. Acupuncturists employ very fine-gauge, sterile, stainless steel needles which are placed at defined anatomic points beneath the skin's surface, chosen to restore balance and regulation in the energetic systems of the body, and to build deficient or move obstructed energy. A growing body of research has shown that acupuncture may improve many physical and mental symptoms including nausea, headaches, musculoskeletal pain, fibromyalgia, insomnia, depression, many of the components of posttraumatic stress disorder, and chemical addictions.

Auricular acupuncture is one of the more widely used microsystems within Eastern medicine. Microsystems use one aspect of the body - for example, the ears, hands or feet - to treat conditions that are present anywhere in the body. In auricular acupuncture, stimulation points on the outer ear are used to access and balance the body's energetic systems; there are over 300 acupuncture points on each ear. Research suggests that auricular acupuncture can provide specific support in working with addiction treatment, mood disorders, obesity, and pain management.

Auricular Acupuncture Proficiencies for Service Provision

To provide auricular acupuncture at DCVAMC, the practitioner must have either (a) a state license in acupuncture (L.Ac.) with a masters degree in acupuncture (M.Ac.) from an Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM), accredited institution, and Diplomat Board Certification from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine; or b) a state license as a Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant with Helms Institute Acupuncture training or its equivalent.

Practitioners must have graduated from an accredited program in their discipline. Acupuncture Master's degrees must come from a program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM). This is the body authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine programs.

In addition, acupuncturists must have completed their NCCAOM Board Certification and obtained their Clean Needle Technique certification. The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) is the only national organization that validates competency in the practice of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine through professional certification.

Practitioners must also provide documentation of a passing score on the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine's Clean Needle Technique course. Clean Needle Technique is a national certification standard in acupuncture needle safety. A practitioner who holds a CNT certificate has demonstrated competency in the safe handling of acupuncture needles in accordance with best practices.

Acupuncturists providing service at DCVAMC must be knowledgeable and sensitive to the unique experiences and special needs of combat-deployed Veterans. The individual must adhere to VHA policies for clinical providers. Non-physician acupuncturists must have a physician- supervisor within the DCVAMC.

Examples of VA Medical Centers With Auricular Acupuncture Programs

McGuire Richmond VA Medical Center
1201 Broad Rock Blvd
Richmond, VA 23249

Ann Arbor VA Medical Center
2215 Fuller Road #312
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

San Diego VA Medical Center
3350 La Jolla Village Dr.
San Diego, CA 92161

Seattle Puget Sound VA Medical Center
1660 South Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

Auricular Acupuncture Session Protocols

DCVAMC's wellness auricular acupuncture program includes sessions tailored to suit the unique needs of the Veteran population, and provide the appropriate level of gentle support for each individual. Auricular acupuncture sessions run between 45-75 minutes.

Auricular wellness sessions include both standardized group auricular acupuncture and tailored, semi-programmed group auricular acupuncture. The tailored auricular acupuncture consists of the evaluation of 12 pre-selected points using an electronic point finder. The five most reactive points are treated in each ear. The standardized group uses the same 5 points on all participants; they are points that are designed to mitigate the stress response in a general way. During the administration of these points, the acupuncturist is required to follow all VHA guidelines and policies surrounding patient care.

All sessions follow a standard protocol, with the specific sequence varying according to the particular background of the Veteran:

- Instructor will pass the sign in sheet for participant to sign in
- Check-in with each participant, with a special focus on whether the participant is attending for the first time
- A brief overview of auricular acupuncture
- Gentle auricular acupuncture support to promote relaxation and wellness
- Continued individual assessment throughout the session
- Final check- in: any questions, comments, or concerns that arose in the session

Specialized discussion beneficial for participants include:

- Giving the option to leave eyes open or closed throughout the session according to the Veteran's preference
- Inviting Veterans to be comfortable for the session by taking off shoes or eyeglasses, or adjusting themselves in their chair
- Inviting Veterans to slow their orienting response, noticing the care and support that is in the room for them – as well as the care and support they have for other participating Veterans

At the end of the session, the instructor will complete an auricular acupuncture wellness note in CPRS, which will include: the length of the session, focus of the session, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the session by the Veteran and plan for future participation. If there are any particular observations or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

Auricular Acupuncture Research

Reinhard, M., Hull, A., McCoy, K., Akhter, J., Duncan, A., Soltes, K., Jecman, C., & Berndtson, K. (2012). *Acupuncture and Meditation for Military Veterans: Patient Satisfaction and Self-Reported Symptom Reduction*. Poster session presented at the meeting of the International Research Congress Integrative Medicine & Health.

Reilly PM, Buchanan TM, Vafides C, Breakey S, Dykes P. (2014). Auricular acupuncture to relieve health care workers' stress and anxiety: impact on caring. *Dimens Crit Care Nurs*. May-Jun; 33(3):151-9.

Schukro RP, Heiserer C, Michalek-Sauberer A, Gleiss A, Sator-Katzenschlager S. (2014). The effects of auricular electroacupuncture on obesity in female patients--a prospective randomized placebo-controlled pilot study. *Complement Ther Med*. Feb; 22(1):21-5.

Shi X, Litscher G, Wang H, Wang L, Zhao Z, Litscher D, Tao J, Gaischek I, Sheng Z. (2013). Continuous auricular electroacupuncture can significantly improve heart rate variability and clinical scores in patients with depression: first results from a transcontinental study. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*. Epub 2013 Nov 12.

Lua PL, Talib NS. (2013). Auricular acupuncture for drug dependence: an open-label randomized investigation on clinical outcomes, health-related quality of life, and patient acceptability. *Altern Ther Health Med*. Jul-Aug; 19 (4): 28-42.

King HC, Hickey AH, Connelly C. (2013). Auricular acupuncture: a brief introduction for military providers. *Military Medicine*. Aug; 178(8): 867-74.

Chen HY, Shi Y, Ng CS, Chan SM, Yung KK, Zhang QL. (2007). Auricular acupuncture treatment for insomnia: a systematic review. *J Altern Complement Med*. Jul-Aug; 13 (6):669-76.

Abdi H, Abbasi-Parizad P, Zhao B, Ghayour-Mobarhan M, Tavallaie S, Rahsepar AA, Parizadeh SM, Safariyan M, Nemati M, Mohammadi M, Darbandi M, Darbandi S, Ferns GA. (2012). Effects of auricular acupuncture on anthropometric, lipid profile, inflammatory, and immunologic markers: a randomized controlled trial study. *J Altern Complement Med*. Jul; 18(7): 668-77.

Usichenko TI, Dinse M, Hermsen M, Witstruck T, Pavlovic D, Lehmann Ch. (2005). Auricular acupuncture for pain relief after total hip arthroplasty - a randomized controlled study. *Pain*. Apr; 114(3): 320-7.

Asher GN, Jonas DE, Coeytaux RR, Reilly AC, Loh YL, Motsinger-Reif AA, Winham SJ. (2010) Auriculotherapy for pain management: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *J Altern Complement Med*. Oct; 16(10):1097-108.

Heartmath Biofeedback: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of Heartmath Biofeedback as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DCVAMC. A Veteran may be referred for a Heartmath session by any DCVAMC clinical care provider. Veterans may elect a Heartmath session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Practitioners of Heartmath Biofeedback in the hospital will become eligible to provide service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: The HeartMath Biofeedback program emphasizes the role of the heart and heart rate variability (HRV) as a key component to increase self-regulation of the nervous system. The HeartMath Biofeedback system uses emWave technology, an advanced heart-rate rhythm monitor which displays the heart's rhythm and allows participants to learn to shift their internal self experience into an optimal state through their focused attention and breathing.

Minimum Proficiencies: The minimum proficiency to provide Heartmath Biofeedback at DCVAMC is to be a Certified Heartmath Practitioner through the completion of the Institute of Heartmath's HeartMath Interventions Program. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of Heartmath Biofeedback as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Heartmath Biofeedback Programs: Minneapolis, San Diego, Long Beach, St. Petersburg, Gainesville, Salisbury, New York, Houston, Palo Alto, Washington D.C.

Session Protocols: In a Heartmath session, as participants learn to track stress responses through the monitor, the facilitator supports the practice of relaxation exercises by the participant, which are then fine-tuned based on feedback. Several different relaxation exercises can be taught and used during a session, including deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and mindfulness. At the end of the session, a practice protocol is developed for home use.

Heartmath providers will document Veteran Heartmath sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: Heartmath Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session and any comments, concerns or issues shared by the Veteran regarding his/her response to the session including recommendations for future sessions.

Research: Research suggests that the program assists participants in increasing stress resilience and improving cognitive function.

Heartmath Biofeedback: Overview

Biofeedback has been used to support relaxation and autonomic regulation since the early 1900's. Edmund Jacobsen, a researcher at Harvard throughout the 1920's and 1930's, was one of the first to develop progressive muscle relaxation as an effective behavioral technique for the alleviation of tension and a variety of medical symptoms, using crude electromyographic equipment to monitor the levels of tension in his patients during the course of a session. Modern biofeedback work involves the sophisticated use of electronic monitoring of normally automatic bodily functions in order to train a person to acquire voluntary control of those functions, and has been successfully used to train patients to control physiological processes including muscle tension, blood pressure, and heart rate.

The HeartMath Biofeedback program emphasizes the role of the heart and heart rate variability (HRV) as a key component to increasing self-regulation of the nervous system. The HeartMath Biofeedback system uses emWave technology, an advanced heart-rate rhythm monitor which displays the heart's rhythm and allows participants to learn to shift their internal self experience into an optimal state through their focused attention and breathing. Additional tools developed by the program broaden participants' education on stress reduction and emotional self-management, which assist through regular practice in creating a healthier automatic response to stress. Research suggests that the Heartmath program assists participants in increasing stress resilience and improving cognitive function.

Heartmath Biofeedback Proficiencies for Service

The minimum proficiency to provide Heartmath Biofeedback at DCVAMC is to become a Certified Heartmath Practitioner through the completion of the Institute of Heartmath's HeartMath Interventions Program, which is designed for doctors, nurses, psychologists, licensed therapists, counselors, social workers, and other health care professionals. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of Heartmath Biofeedback as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Biofeedback competencies developed by the HeartMath Interventions Certified Practitioner Program include:

- Detailed information on the scientific underpinnings of the HeartMath System including the implications of Heart Rate Variability measurement and assessment.
- Specific protocols for integrating HeartMath interventions into professional practice, including:
 - 1) Multi-visit session protocols;
 - 2) One or two visit session protocols for various brief counseling issues;
 - 3) Acute session protocols in an emergency room and other similar situations;
 - 4) Group session protocols; and
 - 5) Session protocols for young children.
- Step-by-step instructions in how to teach individual patients HeartMath's core tools and how to use the emWave technology in professional practice.
- Assessment protocols for Heart Rate Variability (HRV) and psychophysiological status

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Heartmath Biofeedback Programs

Minneapolis VA Medical Center
1 Veterans Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55417

San Diego VA Healthcare System
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161

Long Beach VA Medical Center
5901 E 7th Street
Long Beach, CA 9082

Bay Pines VA Medical Center
10000 Bay Pines Blvd North
St Petersburg, FL 33708

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32601

Hefner VA Medical Center
1601 Brenner Avenue
Salisbury, NC 28144

James J Peters VA Medical Center
130 W Kingsbridge Road
New York, NY 10468

DeBakey VA Medical Center
2002 Holcombe Blvd
Houston, TX 77030

Palo Alto VA Medical Center
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

HeartMath Biofeedback Session Protocols

Heartmath Biofeedback sessions may be conducted individually or with small groups. Heartmath utilizes intentionally generated heart rate rhythmic patterns (heart rate variability or HRV) with specific relaxation techniques to create a permanent shift in the participant's physiologic and emotional response to stress. The changes in HRV are monitored through Heartmath's emWave technology, and give the participants feedback on how their practice is changing their body's response to stress cues.

In a Heartmath session, as participants learn to track stress responses through the monitor, the facilitator supports the practice of relaxation exercises by the participant, which are then fine-tuned based on feedback. Several different relaxation exercises can be taught and used during a session, including deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and mindfulness. As the participant is able to slow their heart rate, they receive instant feedback on their progress on the emWave screen, with the goal being to learn how control their heart rate response on their own, without the use of biofeedback equipment. At the end of the session, a practice protocol is developed for home use.

A typical session includes:

- Veterans sign in on sign-in sheet.
- Class begins with an overview of the session and instruction in using breathing and progressive relaxation techniques
- Participants use the emWave Pro to get an initial baseline evaluation
- Instructor supports the session, teaching self-regulation, stress reduction, and emotional management skills and assessing progress through the emWave monitors
- The progress and changes to the autonomic nervous system are measured and documented as coherence scores
- Discussion and assignment of home practice for the week
- Instructor is available for brief discussion after class or to schedule an appointment at another day/time as needed.

Instructor will complete a Heartmath note in CPRS, and will include the length of the class, focus of the class, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the practice by the Veteran and plan for future attendance. If there are any observations by the instructor, experiences by the student, or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

HeartMath Biofeedback Research

Kim, S., Zemon, V., Cavallo, M., Rath, J., McCraty, R., & Foley, F. (2013) Heart Rate Variability Biofeedback, Executive Functioning and Chronic Brain Injury. *Brain Injury*. 27(2): 209-222.

Ginsberg, J., Berry, M., & Powell, D. (2010). Cardiac Coherence And Posttraumatic Stress Disorder In Combat Veterans. *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*. 16 (4): 52-60.

McCraty, R., & Atkinson, M. (2012) Resilience Training Program Reduces Physiological and Psychological Stress in Police Officers. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*. 1 (5) 44- 67.

McCraty, R. Atkinson, M. & Tomsino, D. (2003) Impact of a Workplace Stress Reduction Program on Blood Pressure and Emotional Health in Hypertensive Employees. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 9 (3) 335-369.

McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., Tiller, M., Rein, G., & Watkins, A.D. (1995) The Effects of Emotions on Short-Term Power Spectrum Analysis of Heart Rate Variability. *American Journal of Cardiology*. 76 (14) 1089-1093,

McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., Tomasino, D., & Stuppy, W.P. (2001) Analysis of twenty-four hour heart rate variability in patients with panic disorder. *Biological Psychology*. (56) 131-150.

Luskin, F., Reitz,, M. Newell, K., Quinn, T.G., & Haskell, W. (2002). A Controlled Pilot Study of Stress Management Training of Elderly Patients with Congestive Heart Failure. *Preventive Cardiology*. (Fall) 162- 176.

McCraty, R., Barrios-Choplin, B., Rozman, D., Atkinson, M., & Watkins, A.D. (1998) The Impact of a New Emotional Self-Management Program on Stress, Emotions, Heart Rate Variability, DHEA and Cortisol. *Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science*. 33 (2) 151- 170.

iRest Yoga Nidra: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of iRest Yoga Nidra as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DC VAMC. A Veteran may be referred for an iRest session by any DC VAMC clinical care provider. Additionally, a Veteran may elect an iRest session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Practitioners of iRest Yoga Nidra in the hospital will become eligible to provide service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: iRest Yoga Nidra is a guided mindfulness meditation program which has been developed over the past twenty-six years by Richard Miller, PhD, a clinical psychologist, author, and researcher. The program consists of a series of sessions during which participants are guided into deep relaxation through a multifaceted approach that includes breathing, body awareness, and progressive relaxation techniques.

Minimum Proficiencies: The minimum level required to teach iRest at DCVAMC is a certificate of completion for Level I as designated by Integrative Restoration Institute (IRI) in California. FTE staff must confirm as part of the validation process that the provision of iRest as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of VA Medical facilities with iRest programs: Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, Palo Alto, San Francisco, Tampa, Portland, Nashville, Washington D.C.

Session Protocols: iRest Yoga Nidra sessions run between 60-90 minutes. Classes are taught utilizing a standard curriculum of meditation scripts that run over the course of eight weeks. A standard eight week course of iRest will be taught as a repeating cycle; once Week/Lesson Eight is completed, the entire sequence of classes will be repeated. A Veteran may begin the class at any point and cycle through the entire sequence in turn.

iRest providers will document Veteran iRest sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: iRest Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session and any comments, concerns or issues shared by the Veteran regarding his/her response to the session, including recommendations for future sessions.

Research: Research suggests that iRest yoga nidra helps decrease anxiety and depression, improve sleep, relieve chronic pain and increase a sense of well-being.

iRest Yoga Nidra: Overview

iRest® Yoga Nidra is a guided mindfulness meditation program which has been developed over the past twenty-six years by Richard Miller, PhD, a clinical psychologist, author, and researcher. The program consists of a series of 1-1.5 hour sessions, during which participants are guided into deep relaxation through a multifaceted approach that includes breathing, body awareness, and progressive relaxation techniques. These activities are taught as skills that participants then learn to use themselves in daily life.

A gentle form of meditation that is easily accessible to anyone without any previous yoga or meditation experience, iRest is uniquely supportive for individuals with a wide range of health conditions and injuries. Rather than sitting with an erect spine and no support, which is more typical of classic meditation practice, iRest offers participants the option of practicing in any comfortable position, including lying down, or sitting comfortably in a chair or wheelchair. The guided instructions and visualizations are simple, and focus primarily on the felt experiences in the body.

Research suggests that iRest yoga nidra helps decrease anxiety and depression, improve sleep, relieve chronic pain and increase a sense of well-being. In June of 2010, iRest was endorsed by the U.S. Army Surgeon General and Defense Centers of Excellence as a complementary and alternative medicine approach, and a Tier One intervention for chronic pain by the Army Surgeon General's Pain Task Force.

iRest Yoga Nidra Proficiencies for Service Provision

There are three levels of training for iRest Yoga Nidra: Level I, Level II, and iRest Teacher Certification as designated by Integrative Restoration Institute (IRI) in California, the professional institute which provides iRest training.

The minimum level required to teach iRest at DCVAMC is a certificate of completion for Level I. Once Level I training is complete, these teachers are qualified to teach from the meditation and relaxation scripts that are included in the basic iRest curriculum. Level II teachers work to become script-free in their teachings, which is also a goal of the certification process for all iRest Teachers.

For a person to achieve the highest level of certification, becoming a Certified iRest Yoga Nidra Teacher, three levels of training are completed: Level I, Level II, and an additional iRest Certification course. Upon completion of the complete certification process, a practitioner may refer to themselves as a “Certified iRest Yoga Nidra Teacher” or an “iRest Teacher.”

FTE staff must confirm that the provision of iRest yoga nidra as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief. As with the other Health and Wellness modalities, an iRest working group for iRest service providers will provide on-going collaboration, continuing education and the facilitation of best practices.

Examples of VA Medical Centers with iRest Yoga Nidra Programs

Chicago VA Federal Health Care Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, IL 60064

Miami VA Medical Center
1201 N.W. 16th Street
Miami, FL 33125

Central Western Massachusetts VA Hospital Center
421 North Main Street
Leeds, MA 01053

Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System
11301 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90073

Palo Alto VA Center
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
400 Veterans Ave
Biloxi, MS 39531

Northern California VA System
10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655

San Francisco VA Center
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121

Tampa VA Medical Center
13000 Bruce B Downs Blvd
Tampa, FL 33612

Rockford IL VA Center
7015 Rote Road, Suite 105
Rockford, IL 61107

Portland VA Medical Center
3710 SW Us Veteran Hospital Road
Portland, OR 97239

Nashville VA Medical
1310 24th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212-2637

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

iRest Yoga Nidra Session Protocols

iRest Yoga Nidra sessions run between 60-90 minutes. Classes are taught utilizing a standard curriculum of meditation scripts that run over the course of eight weeks. An Introduction to Integrative Restoration-iRest Yoga Nidra workbook will be used by the students in class, with CDs available for home practice that are also made available to all VA participants. An eight week course of iRest will be taught as repeating cycles; once Week/Lesson Eight is completed, the entire sequence of classes will be repeated. A Veteran may begin the class at any point and cycle through the entire sequence in turn.

The class will begin with a check-in by the instructor that will include:

- Participant sign-in process
- Asking the group if anyone is attending for the first time
- Asking about home practice via the use of recorded practices given to the Veterans, and address frequency of use, benefits of home practice that might be noted, questions and/or concerns about home practice including how to use the recordings, and anything noted by Veteran in their home practice
- A brief overview of the overall practice including some of the potential benefits that have been recorded through survey and research data, and anecdotal reports from practicing Veterans
- An introduction to the practice that is planned for the day, including an overview of the section of the workbook that is related to the practice for the day. Each Veteran will be given a copy of the workbook for their own personal use to support their continued understanding of the practice as they integrate the practice into their lives.

The instructor will lead an iRest session of approximately 35-40 minutes from the standard 8 week scripts and curriculum. Specialized instructions for VA populations include:

- Giving the option to leave eyes open or closed through the practice
- Reinforcing the use of the Inner Resource should any difficult sensation, emotions, or images arise during the practice

Approximately 5-10 minutes will be spent at the end of each class to check in with participants on the following areas:

- Any questions, comments, or concerns that arose in the practice
- Support for the use of the CDs for home practice and suggestions for how to use them to address specific challenges such as insomnia, chronic pain, and anxiety

iRest providers will document Veteran iRest sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: iRest Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session and any comments, concerns or issues shared by the Veteran regarding his/her response to the session, including recommendations for future sessions. If there are any observations by the instructor, experiences by the

student, or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

iRest Yoga Nidra Research

Bingham, M. O., Peacock, W. P., Fritts, M. J. & Walter, J. A. G. (2014) Effects of integrative restoration on sleep, perceived stress and resilience in military medical center healthcare providers: A pilot study. Retrieved January 20, 2014, from http://www.irest.us/sites/default/files/CCF_Poster_BAMC_Study.pdf

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Borchardt, A. R., Patterson, S. M. & Seng, M. S. (2014). The effect of meditation on cortisol: A comparison of meditation techniques to a control group. Retrieved January 20, 2014, from <http://www.irest.us/sites/default/files/Meditation%20on%20Cortisol%2012.pdf>

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Engel, C. E. J., Choate, C. G., Cockfield, D., Armstrong, D. W., Jonas, W., Walter, J. A. G., . . . Miller, R. (2014). iRest yoga nidra as an adjunctive therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder: A feasibility study. Retrieved January 20, 2014, from http://www.irest.us/sites/default/files/WRAMH_PTSD_YN_Results_0.pdf

Integrative Restoration Institute (2014). iRest yoga nidra research and programs: Current, upcoming and planned iRest yoga nidra research. Retrieved January 20, 2014, from <http://www.irest.us/programs/irest-research-and-programs>

Pence, P., Katz, L. S., Huffman, C. & Cojucar, G. (2014). iRest yoga nidra: A pilot study to treat women Veterans. Retrieved January 20, 2014, from http://www.irest.us/sites/default/files/Long_Beach_VA_MST_Study.pdf

Pritchard, M., Elison-Bowers, P., & Birdsall, B. (2010). Impact of integrative restoration (iRest) meditation on perceived stress levels in multiple sclerosis and cancer outpatients. *Stress and Health*, 26, 233-237.

Stankovic, L. (2011). Transforming trauma: A qualitative feasibility study of integrative restoration (iRest) yoga nidra on combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 21, 23-37.

Wellness Massage: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of massage as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DC VAMC. A Veteran may be referred for a massage session by any DC VAMC clinical care provider. Additionally, a Veteran may elect a massage session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Providers of massage in the hospital will become eligible to the deliver the service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: Massage incorporates the gentle manipulation of superficial and deeper layers of muscle and soft connective tissue using various techniques to enhance function, aid in the healing process, and promote relaxation and well-being. Sessions may include working with the body using various degrees of pressure, tension, motion, or vibration, done either manually or with mechanical aids.

Minimum Proficiencies: To provide massage at DCVAMC, practitioners must have graduated from a school accredited by the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation with a minimum of a 750 hour educational program, and obtained their state licensure, in addition to completing 250 hours of professional hands-on experience in the community prior to the service at the hospital. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of massage as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of VA Medical facilities with Wellness Massage programs: Ann Arbor, Saginaw, Long Beach, Dallas, Washington, D.C.

Session Protocols: DCVAMC's wellness massage program includes sessions tailored to suit the unique needs of the Veteran population, and provide the appropriate level of gentle support for each individual. Massage sessions run between 30-60 minutes.

At the end of the session, the instructor will complete a massage wellness note in CPRS, which will include: the length of the session, focus of the session, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the session by the Veteran and plan for future participation. If there are any particular observations or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

Research: Research suggests that massage helps decrease anxiety and depression, improve sleep, relieve chronic pain and increase a sense of well-being.

Massage: Overview

The practice of massage for wellness dates back thousands of years; references to massage appear in ancient writings from Rome, Greece, Egypt, China, Japan, and India. Massage incorporates the gentle manipulation of superficial and deeper layers of muscle and soft connective tissue using various techniques to enhance function, aid in the healing process, and promote relaxation and well-being. Target tissues may include muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia, skin, joints, or other connective tissue, as well as lymphatic vessels, or organs of the gastrointestinal system.

There are a wide variety of approaches to massage, including acupressure, Shiatsu, Swedish, sports, cranial sacral, and myofacial techniques. Sessions may include a combination of these techniques structured to respond to the needs and preferences of the patient, and may include gently working with the body using various degrees of pressure, tension, motion, or vibration, done either manually or with mechanical aids. Research suggests that massage helps decrease anxiety and depression, improve sleep, relieve chronic pain and increase a sense of well-being.

Massage Proficiencies for Service Provision

To provide massage at DCVAMC, practitioners must have graduated from a school accredited by the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation with a minimum of a 750 hour educational program, and obtained their state licensure, in addition to completing 250 hours of professional hands-on experience in the community prior to the service at the hospital. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of massage as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Preference will be given to practitioners who achieve a Board Certification designation through the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork.

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Massage Programs

Ann Arbor VA Medical Center
2215 Fuller Road #312
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Long Beach VA Medical Center
5901 E 7th Street
Long Beach, CA 90822

Lutz Saginaw VA Medical Center
1500 Weiss Street
Saginaw, MI 48602

Dallas VA Medical Center
4500 S. Lancaster Road
Dallas, TX 75216

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

Massage Session Protocols

DCVAMC's wellness massage program includes sessions tailored to suit the unique needs of the Veteran population, and provide the appropriate level of gentle support for each individual. Massage sessions run between 30-60 minutes.

All sessions follow a standard protocol, with the specific sequence varying according to the particular background of the Veteran:

- Instructor will pass the sign in sheet for participant to sign in
- Check-in with each participant, with a special focus on whether the participant is attending for the first time
- A brief overview of massage
- Gentle massage support to promote relaxation and wellness
- Continued individual assessment throughout the session
- Final check- in: any questions, comments, or concerns that arose in the session

Specialized discussion beneficial for participants include:

- Giving the option to leave eyes open or closed throughout the session according to the Veteran's preference

Safety and comfort for participants in these wellness sessions is paramount. Verbal check in and assessment will continue throughout the session to ensure the Veteran's comfort and support.

At the end of the session, the instructor will complete a massage wellness note in CPRS, which will include: the length of the session, focus of the session, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the session by the Veteran and plan for future participation. If there are any particular observations or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

Massage Research

Cherkin DC, Sherman KJ, Kahn J, et al. A comparison of the effects of 2 types of massage and usual care on chronic low back pain: a randomized, controlled trial. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2011;155(1):1–9.

Corbin L. Safety and efficacy of massage therapy for patients with cancer. *Cancer Control*. 2005;12(3):158–164.

Furlan AD, Imamura M, Dryden T, et al. Massage for low-back pain. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. 2008;(4):CD001929 [edited 2010].

Hillier SL, Louw Q, Morris L, et al. Massage therapy for people with HIV/AIDS. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. 2010;(1): CD007502.

Kalichman L. Massage therapy for fibromyalgia symptoms. *Rheumatology International*. 2010;30(9):1151–1157.

Perlman AI, Ali A, Njike VY, et al. Massage therapy for osteoarthritis of the knee: a randomized dose-finding trial. *PLoS One*. 2012;7(2):e30248.

Sherman KJ, Ludman EJ, Cook AJ, et al. Effectiveness of therapeutic massage for generalized anxiety disorder: a randomized controlled trial. *Depression and Anxiety*. 2010;27(5):441–450.

Harris M, Richards KC. The physiological and psychological effects of slow-stroke back massage and hand massage on relaxation in older people. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. 2010;19(7–8):917–926.

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Moraska A, Pollini RA, Boulanger K, et al. Physiological adjustments to stress measures following massage therapy: a review of the literature. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. 2010;7(4):409–418.

Wilkinson S, Barnes K, Storey L. Massage for symptom relief in patients with cancer: systematic review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 2008; 63(5):430–439.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR): Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DCVAMC. A Veteran may be referred for an MBSR session by any DCVAMC clinical care provider. Veterans may elect an MBSR session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Practitioners of MBSR in the hospital will become eligible to provide service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: MBSR is an eight-week program of weekly 2 ½ hour classes and a full day retreat. The classes provide instruction and practice in mindfulness meditation practices, gentle stretching and mindful yoga, group dialogue and discussions aimed at enhancing awareness in everyday life, and mindful communication, among other topics.

Minimum Proficiencies: To provide MBSR at DCVAMC, the provider must be a certified teacher through the Oasis Institute, Center for Mindfulness, University of Massachusetts Medical School. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of MBSR as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of VA facilities with MBSR Programs: Los Angeles, Seattle, Durham, Little Rock, Madison, Northport, Hines Chicago, Washington D.C.

Session Protocols: The Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction group is a closed group that meets weekly for eight weeks, with each weekly session lasting approximately 2 ½ hours. In addition, there is an all-day Saturday silent retreat that meets between the sixth and seventh class.

MBSR providers will document Veteran MBSR sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: MBSR Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session and any comments, concerns or issues shared by the Veteran regarding his/her response to the session including recommendations for future sessions.

Research: Research suggests that MBSR has a positive effect in reducing medical and psychological symptoms across a wide range of diagnoses including chronic pain, high blood pressure, fibromyalgia, cancer, heart disease, asthma, GI distress, skin disorders, PTSD, panic, fatigue, and sleep disturbances.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR): Overview

Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, developed the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center as a focus of its Stress Reduction Clinic in 1979. The MBSR program is now offered in over 200 medical centers, hospitals, and clinics around the world, including some of the leading integrative medical centers such as the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine, and the Jefferson-Myrna Brind Center for Integrative Medicine.

MBSR is an eight-week program of weekly 2 ½ hour classes and a full day retreat. The classes provide instruction and practice in mindfulness meditation practices, gentle stretching and mindful yoga, group dialogue and discussions aimed at enhancing awareness in everyday life, and mindful communication, among other topics. The classes are also a time for participants to share about their experiences practicing mindfulness, with daily practice being essential to receive maximum benefit from the program.

Research suggests that MBSR is a useful method for improving mental health and reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression. There is nearly 30 years of research on the positive effects of MBSR for reducing medical and psychological symptoms across a wide range of diagnoses including chronic pain, high blood pressure, fibromyalgia, cancer, heart disease, asthma, GI distress, skin disorders, PTSD, panic, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of stress.

MBSR: Proficiencies for Service Provision

The training curriculum for MBSR teachers is regulated by Oasis Institute, Center for Mindfulness, University of Massachusetts Medical School; only a person specifically certified in teaching the MBSR curriculum can teach MBSR. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of MBSR as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief. The following proficiencies are required to independently teach MBSR at DCVAMC:

For those beginning professional training in MBSR on March 1, 2013 or after, the minimum requirements to begin teaching MBSR are as follows:

- (1) Completion of an eight week MBSR course as a participant
- (2) Completion of Oasis Institute's MBSR in Mind-Body Medicine
- (3) Completion of Oasis Institute's Practicum in MBSR
- (4) Completion of Oasis Institute's Teacher Development Intensive
- (5) Completion of two or more 5-10 day silent, teacher led mindfulness retreats.
- (6) Preliminary teaching experiences (short classes, workshops)
- (7) Completion of Oasis Institute's Essential Study
- (8) Continued personal and professional development. This includes at least two years of ongoing daily mindfulness meditation practice; ongoing practice in body-centered awareness practices such as yoga, tai-chi, or qi-gong; and relevant professional education and training.

For those who began training prior to March 1, 2013, minimum requirements to teach MBSR are as follows:

- (1) Completion of an eight week MBSR course as a participant
- (2) Completion of Oasis Institute's MBSR in Mind-Body Medicine or
Completion of Oasis Institute's Practicum in MBSR or
Completion of Oasis Institute's Teacher Development Intensive
- (3) Completion of one or more 5-10 day silent, teacher led mindfulness retreats.
- (4) Continued personal and professional development. This includes at least two years of ongoing daily mindfulness meditation practice; ongoing practice in body-centered awareness practices such as yoga, tai-chi, or qi-gong; and relevant professional education and training.
- (5) Continued training to complete the above requirements or authorization letter from Oasis Institute to teach MBSR

****March 1, 2013 cut-off date is based on new training requirements from the Oasis Institute, Center for Mindfulness, University of Massachusetts Medical School that were made effective for March 1, 2013**

Examples of VA Medical Centers with MBSR Programs

Greater LA VA Medical Center
11301 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90073

Puget Sound VA Medical Center
1660 S Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108

Durham VA Medical Center
508 Fulton St, Durham, NC 27705

Middleton VA Medical Center
2500 Overlook Terrace
Madison, WI 53705

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System
4300 W 7th Street
Little Rock, AR 72205

Northport VA Medical Center
79 Middleville Road
Northport, NY 11768

Hines VA Medical Center
5000 S 5th Avenue
Hines, IL 60141

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

MBSR Session Protocols

The Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction group is a closed group that meets weekly for eight weeks. Each weekly classes is 2 ½ hours long. In addition, there is an all-day Saturday silent retreat that meets between the sixth and seventh class. Classes are taught utilizing a standard curriculum: The University of Massachusetts Medical School, Stress Reduction Clinic, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Curriculum Guide 2009 by Melissa Blacker, MA, Florence Meleo-Meyer, MS, MA, Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, and Saki Santorelli, Ed.D, MA.

A study binder and CDs are provided to students to assist with home practice, and home practice is expected six days a week. Group facilitators' contact information is provided to Veterans should they need assistance, have questions, or have concerns that arise between class sessions.

A typical class includes:

- (1) Veterans sign in on sign-in sheet.
- (2) As Veterans sign in, Veterans' home practice logs with facilitator's comments are returned to Veterans.
- (3) As Veterans sign in, group facilitator is available for Veterans to discuss any salient issues pertaining to the day's class (needing to leave session early, recent health concerns, etc.).
- (4) Class begins with instruction and practice in an experiential exercise (i.e. body scan, sitting meditation, movement meditation, walking meditation)
- (5) Discussion of day's experiential exercise and discussion of home practice including any questions or areas of concern. Veterans turn in their most recent home practice logs following this discussion.
- (6) Introduction of theme for day's discussion and introduction of discussion topic for the day (i.e. reacting vs. responding to stress, mindfulness communication)
- (7) Discussion and assignment of home practice for the week. Pertinent materials in provided binders are reviewed.
- (8) Class closes with a sitting meditation.
- (9) Group facilitator available for brief discussion after class or to schedule an appointment at another day/time as needed.

Instructor will complete MBSR note in CPRS using the CPRS Note Title: MBSR Wellness Note. MBSR notes will include the length of the class, focus of the class, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veterans, comments about the practice by the Veteran and plan for future attendance. If there are any observations by the instructor, experiences by the student, or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

MBSR Research

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Saxe, G., Hebert, J., Carmody, J., Kabat-Zinn, J., Rosenzweig, P., Jarzowski, D., Reed, G., and Blute, R. Can Diet, in conjunction with Stress Reduction, Affect the Rate of Increase in Prostate-specific Antigen After Biochemical Recurrence of Prostate Cancer? J. of Urology, In Press, 2001.

Kaplan, HK, Goldenberg, DL, and Galvin-Nadeau, M. The impact of a meditation-based stress reduction program on fibromyalgia. Gen Hosp. Psychiatry (1993) 15:284-289.

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Randolph, PD, Caldera YM, Tacone AM et al. The long-term combined effects of medical treatment and a mindfulness-based behavioral program for the multidisciplinary management of chronic pain in West Texas. Pain Digest (1999) 9:103-112.

Teasdale, JD, Segal, ZV, Williams MG, Ridgeway, VA, Soulsby, JM, Lau, MA. Prevention of Relapse/Recurrence in Major Depression by Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. J. of Consulting and Clinical Psychology (2000) 68:615-623.

Specia, M, Carlson, LE, Goodey, E, Angen, M. A randomized, wait-list controlled clinical trial: the effect of a mindfulness-based stress reduction program on mood and symptoms of stress in cancer outpatients. Psychosom Med (2000) 62:613-622..

Williams JMG, Teasdale JD, Segal ZV and Soulsby J. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy reduces overgeneral autobiographical memory in formerly depressed patients. J Abnorm Psychol (2001).

Tai Chi and Qi Gong: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of Tai Chi and Qi Gong as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DCVAMC. A Veteran may be referred for a Tai Chi or Qi Gong session by any DCVAMC clinical care provider. Veterans may elect a Tai chi or Qi Gong session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Practitioners of Tai Chi and Qi Gong in the hospital will become eligible to provide service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: Tai Chi and Chi Gong are exercises that use breathing, posture, and movement along with focused awareness and attention to stimulate the sensations of Qi (energy) in the body. With their roots in Chinese medicine and martial arts, Qi Gong and Tai Chi are traditionally used for exercise, wellness and meditation.

Minimum Proficiencies: At DCVAMC, Tai Chi instructors must be a Level II teacher as certified by the American Tai Chi and Qi Gong Association. At DCVAMC, Qi Gong instructors must be a Level III teacher as certified by the National Qigong Association. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of Tai Chi and/or Qi Gong as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Tai Chi or Qi Gong Programs: Northport, Sioux Falls, Phoenix, Greater Los Angeles, Miami, Richmond, Portland, Seattle, Washington D.C.

Session Protocols: Tai Chi and Qi Gong sessions run between 45-60 minutes. A Veteran or staff member may begin the class at any point and cycle through the entire sequence in turn. Tai Chi and Qi Gong practices can each be modified to accommodate varied populations with specific limitations.

Instructor will complete a Tai Chi or Qi Gong note Wellness Note in CPRS and will include the length of the class, focus of the class, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the practice by the Veteran and plan for future attendance.

Research: Research indicates Qi Gong and Tai Chi may have a positive effect on bone health, cardiopulmonary fitness, physical function, fall prevention and balance, and psychological factors including anxiety and depression.

Tai Chi and Qi Gong: Overview

Tai Chi and Chi Gong are exercises that use breathing, posture, and movement along with focused awareness and attention to stimulate the sensations of Qi (energy) in the body. With its roots in Chinese medicine and martial arts, Qi Gong and Tai Chi are traditionally used for exercise, wellness and meditation. Because the approach is low impact and can be done lying, sitting, or standing, Qi Gong is accessible for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people recovering from injuries. Beginning postures are done standing, with each posture flowing gently into the next without pause, ensuring that the body is in constant motion.

The literal meaning of Tai Chi is “supreme ultimate boxing technique.” Tai Chi can be considered as a martial art practice, with a full range of adjunct exercises and strength development exercises from beginning to advanced levels; Tai Chi as taught traditionally also includes many Qi Gong exercises. The literal meaning of Qi Gong is “Qi development skills,” and implies a process of learning how to accumulate and direct energy in the body. Qi Gong generally includes meditations, focused attention, breathing exercises, and also movement exercise systems that may resemble martial arts or traditional dance.

Research indicates Qi Gong and Tai Chi may have a positive effect on bone health, cardiopulmonary fitness, physical function, fall prevention and balance, and psychological factors including anxiety and depression.

Tai Chi and Qi Gong Proficiencies for Service Provision

The American Tai Chi and Qi Gong Association has established instructional proficiencies for Tai Chi Instructors. At DCVAMC, Tai Chi instructors must be a Level II teacher as certified by ATCQGA.

A certified Tai Chi Instructor Level II includes:

- At least 150 documented hours in formal Tai Chi training
- At least 1000 hours of experience in teaching Tai Chi
- Awards, publications, competition experience
- Three reference letters from other Tai Chi instructors, students, or trainers.

The National Qigong Association has also established basic curriculums for training as a Qi Gong instructor. At DCVAMC, instructors must be a Level III teacher as certified by NQA.

A certified Qi Gong Instructor Level II includes:

- At least 500 hours documented formal Qigong training
- At least 5 years Qigong teaching experience
- Demonstration of a high level of understanding of the practice as well as advanced knowledge and appreciation of its benefits.
- Provision of instruction not only in technical forms, but in increasing students' inner Qi-awareness and improvement in their quality of life.

Additional preferred competencies for both Tai Chi and Qi Gong teachers at DCVAMC include:

- Familiarity with the basic principles of Chinese medicine, including proficiency with the theoretical background of internal Qi trajectories, primary meridians and Qi cultivation principles.
- Training in one or more of the following: physical anatomy, kinesiology, movement therapies including Feldenkreis, Alexander technique, Body-Centered Psychotherapy, Asian Bodywork Therapy (Shiatsu, Chi Nei Tsang, Anma, Jin Shin Do etc.) or Western massage therapy.
- Other experience or training in martial arts including Wushu, Judo, Karate, Jujitsu or Chin-na.

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Tai Chi and Qi Gong Programs

Northport VAMC
79 Middleville Road
Northport, NY 11768

Sioux Falls VA Health Care System
2501 West 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Richmond VAMC
1201 Broad Rock Blvd
Richmond, VA 23224

Miami VAMC
1201 NW 16th Street
Miami, FL 33125

Phoenix VA Health Care
650 E. Indian School Road
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Greater Los Angeles VAMC
11301 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90073

Fargo VA Health Care System
2101 N Elm Street
Fargo, ND 58102

Oscar G. Johnson VAMC
325 E H Street
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Madison VAMC
2500 Overlook Terrace
Madison, WI 53705

Portland VA Medical Center
3710 SW Us Veteran Hospital Road
Portland, OR 97239

Puget Sound VA
1660 S Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

Tai Chi and Qi Gong Session Protocols

Tai Chi and Qi Gong sessions run between 45-60 minutes. A Veteran may begin the class at any point and cycle through the entire sequence in turn. Tai Chi and Qi Gong practices can each be modified to accommodate varied populations with specific limitations. Students must practice at home to get maximum benefit.

If classes are in a studio space with freshly cleaned floors (i.e. dance studio or yoga studio), then bare feet are best for participants' balance and stability. Otherwise, any kind of sport shoe is required. Practice outside is preferred. Participants are encouraged to wear loose clothing allowing for expansion around the waist to support lower abdominal breathing. Exercises can be performed seated, or even in the case of Qi Gong, lying down, with the instructor maintaining a safe and respectful space for all levels of participation.

Instructors will meet with participants in an orientation session to explain the modality they are teaching and to establish the idea of Persistent Diligent Practice, with mild challenges that foster incremental improvement. A short intake interview will take place for all participants prior to the start of the sessions.

Each session will begin with a check-in by the instructor that will include:

- Participant sign in
- Participants are welcomed to the group with a short introduction to the practice.
- The instructor will clarify if anyone is attending for the first time, and ask if there are any questions from home practice from those who are already participants.
- Instructor will provide a brief overview of the overall practice, with an introduction to the practice that is planned for the day.
- Practice begins, with consistent checking in with participants to confirm that they understand the exercise, and are able to focus on a state of meditative awareness.
- Benefits from practice cover a broad spectrum; as each movement or technique is introduced the particular benefit can be described, but it is important that participants spend most of the time actually practicing without having to think about theory or perfecting technique. Most individual movements are simple to learn.
- Relaxation during movements and slowness in movement are ways for the body to make immediate adjustments and find a comfortable path.
- The instructor will provide simple feedback to correct posture and instruction to moderate the exercise to match any current limitation of a participant.

Specialized instructions beneficial for specialized populations include:

- Deep or long stances are advanced techniques and should be avoided in the beginning. Forms will be modified to accommodate beginners, those who are older, or those who have joint problems.

- Relaxation techniques of various types are used to soften muscles and begin positive changes in breathing and body awareness.

Approximately 5-10 minutes will be spent at the end of each class to check in with participants on the following areas:

- Any questions, comments, or concerns that arose in the practice
- Support for home practice and suggestions on how to use the basic practices learned in class to address specific challenges, such as insomnia, chronic pain, and anxiety

Instructor will complete a Tai Chi or Qi Gong note Wellness Note in CPRS and will include the length of the class, focus of the class, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the practice by the Veteran and plan for future attendance. If there are any observations by the instructor, or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

Tai Chi and Qi Gong Research

Jahnke, R., Larkey, L., Rogers, C., Etnier, J; & Lin, F. (2010). A comprehensive review of health benefits of qigong and tai chi. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 24 (6): e1–e25.

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Fang Wang, Jenny K. M. Man, Eun-Young Othelia Lee, et al. (2013) The Effects of Qigong on Anxiety, Depression, and Psychological Well-Being: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. (2013) 1-16.

Reiki: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of Reiki as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DC VA Medical Center. A Veteran may be referred for a Reiki session by any DCVAMC clinical care provider. Veterans may elect a Reiki session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Practitioners of Reiki in the hospital will become eligible to provide service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: Reiki is a safe, gentle, nonintrusive technique that fosters wellness by promoting relaxation and stress reduction.

Minimum Proficiencies: Reiki providers at Washington DC VAMC will provide documentation indicating they have been trained by a Reiki Master who is an affiliate member of the International Center for Reiki Training (ICRT), the international Reiki professional organization. DCVAMC providers must have a master level certification to provide Reiki to Veterans. FTE staff must confirm as part of the validation process that the provision of Reiki as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of Other VA Medical Facilities with Reiki Programs: Minneapolis, Manchester, Chicago, Seattle, New York, Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C.

Session Protocols: Reiki sessions run between 10-60 minutes; Veterans may choose to receive Reiki lying on a table or sitting in a chair. Sessions may be either touch or non-touch, honoring the preference of each individual Veteran. Reiki providers will document Veteran Reiki sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: Energetic Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session and any comments, concerns or issues shared by the Veteran including recommendations for future sessions.

Research: Research suggests that Reiki can decrease blood pressure, and assist in the management of pain, depression, and anxiety.

Reiki: Overview

Reiki is a gentle, nonintrusive technique that fosters wellness through a holistic approach which promotes relaxation and stress reduction by supporting balance among all aspects of an individual – mind, body, emotions, and spirit. Commonly translated from the Japanese as “Universal Life-Force Energy,” Reiki was initially developed and taught by Dr. Mikao Usui in Japan in the early 1920's.

During a Reiki session, the provider's hands are placed near or lightly touching various parts of the person's body, including the head, shoulders, stomach, legs, and feet. Most individuals receiving Reiki report feelings of deep relaxation, and often fall asleep during a session. Sessions can last from ten minutes to more than an hour, depending upon available time. Research suggests that Reiki can decrease blood pressure, and assist in the management of pain, depression, and anxiety.

In 2007, the American Hospital Association reported more than 800 American hospitals (>15%) offered Reiki as part of their hospital services. Reiki programs are currently offered at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Georgetown University Medical Center, University of Maryland Medical Center, Winchester Medical Center, INOVA Fair Oaks Hospital, Warren Memorial Hospital, and Fauquier Health Hospital.

Reiki Proficiencies for Service Provision

Reiki providers at Washington DC VAMC will provide documentation certifying that they have been trained by a Reiki Master who is an affiliate member of the International Center for Reiki Training (ICRT), the international Reiki professional organization. Affiliate Reiki Masters will use ICRT approved manuals in their classes and agree to abide by the ICRT code of ethics and standards of practice. DC VAMC providers must have a master level certification to provide Reiki to Veterans. FTE Staff must confirm that the provision of Reiki as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Reiki 1 and 2 Competencies include:

- The history of Reiki
- Reiki practice overview
- Understanding the human energy system
- Reiki foundational approaches and techniques
- Hand positions for providing Reiki to self and others
- The protocol for a complete Reiki session
- Values and ethics of a Reiki practitioner

Advanced Reiki Training/Master Competencies include:

- Reiki master meditation to strengthen mental focus and awareness
- Reiki master approaches to service provision
- Advanced Reiki techniques and tools
- Instruction and practice on teaching Reiki
- The values and service orientation of a Reiki master

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Reiki Programs

Minneapolis VA Health Care System
1 Veterans Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55417

Manchester VA Medical Center
718 Smyth Road
Manchester, NH 03104

Jesse Brown VA Medical Center
820 S Damen Ave #119
Chicago, IL 60612

Puget Sound VA Health Care System
1660 S Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108

VA NY Harbor Healthcare System
800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, NY 11209

North Las Vegas VA Medical Center
6900 North Pecos Road
North Las Vegas, NV 89086

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

Reiki Session Protocols

Reiki sessions run between 10-60 minutes; Veterans may choose to receive Reiki lying on a table or sitting in a chair. Sessions may be either touch or non-touch, honoring the preference of each individual Veteran.

The Reiki provider will introduce him/herself and provide a brief explanation of Reiki – what it is and what to expect during the session, and answer any questions the Veteran may have.

Once the Veteran is comfortable and ready to proceed, the provider's hands are placed on or above different locations of the body and held in each position, for 3-5 minutes, or until the provider feels they should move their hands to the next position.

Typical areas of focus for these positions include:

- Crown of the head
- Ears
- Shoulder / collar bone
- Heart
- Abdomen
- Hips
- Knees
- Feet

Providers will ensure time is available at the end of each session to check in with participants regarding their experience and answer any questions about the session; providers will also invite participants to continue to drink water as they prepare to leave the session.

Reiki providers will document Veteran Reiki sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: Energetic Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session and any comments, concerns or issues shared by the Veteran regarding his/her response to the session including recommendations for future sessions. If there are any observations by the instructor, or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

Reiki Research

Bicocco N, Guiuame C, Stotto S, et al. The effects of Reiki therapy on pain and anxiety in patients attending a day oncology and infusion services unit. *Am J Hosp Palliative Care*. 2012; 29 (4): 290-294.

Miles P. Preliminary report on the use of Reiki with HIV-related pain and anxiety. *Altern Ther Health Med*. 2003; 9(2): 36.

Olson K, Hanson J, Michaud M. A phase II trial of Reiki for the management of pain in advanced cancer patients. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2003; 26(5): 990-997.

Tsang KL, Carlson LE, Olson K. Pilot crossover trial of Reiki versus rest for treating cancer-related fatigue. *Integr Cancer Ther*. 2007; 6 (1): 25-35.

Vitale AT, O'Connor PC. The effect of Reiki on pain and anxiety in women with abdominal hysterectomies. *Holist Nurs Pract*. 2006; 20 (6): 263-272.

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Friedman RS, Burg MM, Miles P, Lee F, Lampert R. Effects of Reiki on autonomic activity early after acute coronary syndrome. *J Am Col Cardiol*. 2010; 56(12): 995-996.

Mackay N, Hansen S, McFarlane O. Autonomic nervous system changes during Reiki treatment: a preliminary study. *J Altern Complement Med*. 2004; 10(6): 1077-1081.

Herron-Marx S, Price-Knol E, Burden B, Hicks C. A systematic review of the use of Reiki in health care. *Altern Complement Ther*. 2008; 14(1): 37-42.

van der Vaarr S, Gijzen VM, de Wildt SN, Korten G. A systematic review of the therapeutic effects of Reiki. *J Altern Complement Med*. 2009;15 (11): 1157-1169.

Bossi LM, Ott MJ, de Cristotaro S. Reiki as a clinical intervention in oncology nursing practice. *Clin J Oncoll Nurs*. 2008; 12 (3): 489-494.

Bourque AL, Sullivan ME, Winter MR. Reiki as a pain management adjunct in screening colonoscopy. *Gastroenterol Nurs*. 2012; 35 (5): 308-312.

Yoga: Policy for Wellness Service Provision

Policy Purpose: This policy is established to provide guidelines on the use of yoga as an Integrative Health and Wellness Program approved wellness modality for use at DCVAMC. A Veteran may be referred for a Yoga session by any DCVAMC clinical care provider. Veterans may elect a Yoga session during their IHW orientation, or their individual service department's orientation.

Validation Process: Instructors of yoga in the hospital will become eligible to provide service after undergoing the Integrative Health and Wellness Practitioner Validation Process, providing the identified certifications, and continuing their on-going participation in their collaborative working groups.

Overview: Yoga combines movement and postures, clear mental focus, and breathing techniques to help people experience an increased sense of well-being and relaxation; to improve general physical health; and to facilitate flexibility and muscle strength.

Minimum Proficiencies: Yoga providers at DCVAMC must be certified as an RYT-200 from a Yoga Alliance certified school. In addition to this designation, they will have had a minimum of one year teaching experience prior to starting at the VA hospital. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of yoga as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

Examples of VA Medical Centers with Yoga Programs: Madison, Sioux Falls, Seattle, Greater Los Angeles, Portland, Boston, Denver, Washington, D.C.

Session Protocols: DCVAMC's yoga program includes health and wellness classes for all levels of individuals including chair yoga, beginner classes, multi-level, chronic illnesses/cancer, and classes tailored for the geriatric population. Yoga classes are structured to suit the unique needs of the Veteran population at each level, and provide the appropriate combination of physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation/guided imagery for each group. All participants will be reminded regularly of the importance of tuning in to their physical and emotional state during practice, and will be encouraged not to go beyond their ability or what is comfortable for them during that particular session.

Yoga providers will document Veteran yoga sessions in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), using the CPRS Note Title: Yoga Wellness Note. The note will include the length of the session, any comments or questions raised by the Veteran, and recommendations for future sessions.

Research: Research suggests that yoga assists in positively managing pain, insomnia, anxiety, and depression, and increasing flexibility and balance.

Yoga: Overview

Originating in India, yoga is an ancient wellness practice dating back thousands of years; “yoga,” a Sanskrit word meaning to “join” or “unite,” dates back to 3000 B.C. Yoga combines movement and postures, clear mental focus, and breathing techniques to help people experience an increased sense of well-being and relaxation; to improve general physical health; and to facilitate flexibility and muscle strength. There are many forms of yoga including the Hatha, Iyengar, Anusara, Bhakti, Ashtanga, Kriya, Kundalini, and Kripalu traditions. Each approach utilizes various degrees of stretching, movement, meditation, and breathing to achieve balance and harmony throughout the mind and body.

The creation of balance, strength, and flexibility through yoga is done through the performance of a series of poses or postures, each of which has specific physical benefits. The poses can be done quickly in succession, or more slowly to increase stamina and perfect the alignment of the pose. A misconception which often prevents individuals from participating in yoga is the belief that yoga is only for the young and flexible. For those requiring additional support, chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga that is practiced sitting in a chair, or standing using a chair for support.

Over the past few decades, research has shown that numerous conditions can benefit from a regular yoga practice, including alcohol/substance abuse, chronic pain, anxiety, cancer, depression, PTSD, heart disease, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis, obesity, and diabetes. Yoga promotes healing in the body in a number of ways. It strengthens muscles and increases oxygenation to the tissues, and it improves immune, joint, and brain function. Cancer patients report decreased stress and an increased sense of well-being, aiding in their ability to effectively cope with the challenging effects that radiation and chemotherapy treatments have on the body. Yoga also promotes weight loss through increased body respect and awareness, leading to healthier lifestyle choices.

Yoga Proficiencies for Service Provision

All yoga instructors at DCAVMC will have a minimum requirement for service provision of completing a 200 hour program from a Yoga Alliance certified school. The Yoga Alliance is the main professional and trade association for yoga teachers and schools across multiple disciplines in the United States.

A two hundred hour yoga teacher training program following the Yoga Alliance's specified curriculum results in the certification of a yoga teacher as an RYT-200. In addition to this designation, yoga teachers at DCVAMC will need to have had a minimum of one year teaching experience prior to starting at the hospital. FTE staff must confirm that the provision of yoga as a wellness modality falls within their state licensure, and practice with the concurrence of their Service Chief.

In addition to the RYT-200 certification, DCVAMC yoga teachers will acquire practical knowledge of the following Core Competencies during the yoga service provision orientation.

- Working with TBI, PTSD, Trauma, and Chronic Pain
- Adapting yoga exercises for patients with chronic illnesses
- Establishing safety guidelines for specialty populations

All yoga instructors will be required to be certified with the Yoga Alliance, and as a result will need to comply with their on-going CEU requirements.

Examples of other VA Medical Centers with Yoga Programs

Madison VA Medical Center
2500 Overlook Terrace
Madison, WI 53705-2286

Sioux Falls VA Medical Center
2501 West 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Seattle VA Medical Center
1660 S Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108

Greater Los Angeles Medical Center
11301 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90073

Portland VA Medical Center
3710 SW Us Veteran Hospital Road
Portland, OR 97239

Boston VA Medical Center
150 South Huntington Avenue
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Denver VA Medical Center
1055 Clermont Street
Denver, CO 80220

Washington D.C. VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street NW
Washington, DC 20422

In addition, yoga is being offered at The Walter Reed Medical Center as well as many US Military Bases (Soldier 360 Program) throughout the world in order to increase focus/concentration among active duty soldiers, manage stress, and decrease the symptoms associated with PTSD.

Yoga Session Protocols

DCVAMC's yoga program includes health and wellness classes for all levels of individuals including chair yoga, beginner classes, multi-level, chronic illnesses/cancer, and classes tailored to the geriatric population. Yoga classes are tailored to suit the unique needs of the Veteran population at each level, and provide the appropriate combination of physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation/guided imagery for each group.

All classes follow a standard protocol, with the specific sequence varying according to the particular training and yoga tradition of the teacher:

- Instructor will pass the sign in sheet for students to sign in
- Check-in with each participant, with a special focus on whether the participant is attending for the first time
- A brief overview of the day's practice
- Centering
- Asana (a series of various physical postures to promote relaxation and wellness)
- Continued individual assessment throughout the practice
- Breathing techniques (3-part breath, conscious breathing)
- Meditation
- Final check-in: any questions, comments, or concerns that arose in the session

Safety for participants in these wellness sessions is paramount. Therefore, no physical adjustments will be made by the teachers, which might push participants past their comfort levels. Only verbal cues will be given to ensure that all Veterans are safely performing the postures. All participants will be reminded regularly of the importance of tuning in to their physical and emotional state during practice, and will be encouraged not to go beyond their ability or what is comfortable for them that day. With several populations, especially those with chronic illnesses or cancer, the physical postures will include limited and very simple movements in a chair and will be taught by a qualified instructor.

At the end of the session, the instructor will complete a yoga wellness note in CPRS, which will include the length of the class, focus of the class, any specific concerns or issues that were brought up by the Veteran, comments about the practice by the Veteran, and plans for future attendance. If there are any observations by the instructor, experiences by the student, or need to contact other providers regarding the Veteran, this will be noted as well in the session notes.

Yoga Research

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McCall, M. C., Ward, A., Roberts, N. & Heneghan, C. (2013) Overview of Systematic Reviews: Yoga as a Therapeutic Intervention for Adults with Acute and Chronic Health Conditions. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. (2013): 18 pages.

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Bussing, A., Michalsen, A., Khalsa, S., Telles, S., & Sherman, K.J. (2012). Effects of yoga on mental and physical health: a short summary of reviews. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. 1-7.

Büssing, A., Ostermann, T., Lüdtkke, R., & Michalsen, A. (2012). Effects of yoga interventions on pain and pain-associated disability: a meta-analysis. *The Journal of Pain*. 13(1): 1-9.

Cabral, P., Meyer, H., & Ames, D. (2011). Effectiveness of yoga therapy as a complementary treatment for major psychiatric disorders: a meta-analysis. *The Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders*. 13(4).

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Da Silva, T.L., Ravindran, L.N., & Ravindran, A.V. (2009). Yoga in the treatment of mood and anxiety disorders: a review. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*. 2: 6-16.

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